

Abstract

Thesis: Exiled Spanish Intellectuals and the Historiography of the Spanish Civil War

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Degree: Master of Arts

College: Sciences and Humanities

Date: May 2021

Pages: 108

The historiography of the Spanish Civil War, on account of three factors, is highly unique. The first is that scholarship of the war was dominated by foreign historians from Britain and America and continues to be so forty-five years after the death of Francisco Franco. Second, the first major history of the war, Hugh Thomas' 1961 book, was published twenty-two years after the war's end in 1939, a chronological gap not apparent in the study of most other modern wars. Third, historians have demonstrated an overwhelming sympathy for the losing side of the conflict, namely, the Second Spanish Republic, which fell to Franco's Nationalists, aided by Nazi Germany and Mussolini's Italy. Against this classic narrative of the war's historiography, I argue that significant but hitherto largely neglected studies of the war were being conducted by exiled Spanish historians in the 1950s, and that their insights have relevance in the present day. This thesis examines the scholarly output of four historians originally from Spain who experienced personal and professional displacement as a result of the war. This undertaking is valid for several reasons. First, in the case of two of these historians, who were medievalists rather than historians of modern Europe, their rich insights into the distant past of Spain uniquely enabled them to understand the conflict and through much deeper currents in Spanish history, ones that are not easily explained through reference to the modern ideologies which are said to have driven the conflict (i.e., fascism, communism, etc.). Moreover, the position of these writers as eyewitnesses to the outbreak of the conflict and their acquaintanceship with some of the major politicians in Spain before the war means that their histories may offer something of an "insider's view" of Spanish culture and questions of identity of the early 20th century. A thorough investigation of these scholarly works thus has much to offer contemporary researchers on the Spanish Civil War, despite their relative obscurity at the time of their publication.